

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4809

1. Name

Historic 410 - 420 South Duncan Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 410 - 420 South Duncan Street
city, town Baltimore
state & zip code Maryland 21231 county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	X occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
X building(s)	X private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	X private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	X yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name
street & number telephone
city, town state & zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title
date federal state county local
depository for survey records
city, town state & zip code

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check One

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

☒ original site
☐ moved:
date of move: _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The west side of the 400 block of S. Duncan St. is made up of two different groups of houses.

410-416 S. Duncan St. are a group of four two-bay-wide, two-story brick houses with low-pitched gable roofs are typical of the small alley houses built in Baltimore in the 1850s, often along especially narrow secondary alley streets running perpendicularly off the main "alley" street. In many cases, alley houses such as these are still occupied by working class families and many are still covered with the formstone put on in the 1950s or 1960s.

The houses are 11' and 11'3" wide and occupy lots 38' deep. Each house is only two-rooms deep. The pitch of the gable roof is especially low, a characteristic of this particular type of two-story, gable-roofed alley house. The houses are probably constructed in common bond, but all of the facades are now covered with formstone. Originally each house had a simple brick corbelled cornice, but all are now obscured by the stucco and formstone. Chimneys are located at the rear end of the house.

The original door and window openings have been completely obscured by the stucco and formstone coverings, though they appear to have had flat wood lintels and sills. All windows are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. No original doors survive and the row shows a mix of replacement door styles, all surmounted by a single light transom. The houses have no basements, the entrances being reached by one concrete step. A flat-linteled sallyport runs between each pair of houses to provide for service access to the rear yards in groups of houses where the lots run back-to-back.

The houses are basically two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace.

8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates c. 1860 and c. 1885

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

410 - 416 S. Duncan St. are significant as being representative of a surviving group of extremely modest two-story, gable-roofed houses built in Fells Point in the 1850s and 1860s to serve as inexpensive housing for the influx of newly arrived immigrant families seeking work in harbor-related activities or in the first small factories being built at this time. Most of these houses were located along narrow alley streets, or along even narrower courts. In terms of design, the houses are basically the descendants of earlier Federal-style working class housing built in the early decades of the century, but without the usual dormer story of such houses. Because there is no dormer story the roof slope is much less steep in these later versions of the style. The houses have two small rooms on each floor, with a centrally located, tightly winding, narrow staircase.

418 - 420 S. Duncan St. are significant as representing a level of artistic stylishness brought to small street houses in the 1880s, when their forms closely copied the late Italianate style of main street houses.

The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the period 1870 to 1910. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and northeast of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide two- or three-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell for \$1,200 to \$1,500; small street houses for \$600 - \$800.

The land originally belonged to the Patterson family as part of their 18th century estate, which also included the land given by the family to the city for Patterson Park. In the late 1860s the Patterson heirs began developing this block by leasing parcels to various builders who constructed modestly scaled and priced housing for the mainly German immigrant families who were settling near the port-related fledgling industries of Canton. Most of the houses, including these three, sold to mainly German-American semi-skilled tradesmen and laborers employed in nearby factories, who received mortgages from a variety of local building and loans, many of them sponsored by the German community.

B-4809

Continuation Sheet

418-420 S. Duncan St. are two-bay-wide, three-story high late Italianate-style brick houses with shed roofs and wooden scroll-sawn bracketed cornices. One of the houses retain its original brick facades, which was always painted; the other has been covered with formstone.

The houses are three stories in height, 15' wide and occupy lots 48' deep. Each house is three small rooms deep and there is no backbuilding. The houses are constructed in running bond and were originally painted. Only 418 retains any original features. The shed roofs is capped by a wooden cornice consisting of a crown molding supported by three long scroll-sawn brackets decorated with grooves, that were originally connected by a lower molding strip, and ended with a distinct trefoil pattern. The frieze panel, which also serves as ventilation for the attic, is decorated with a row of vine-like shapes, created with a jig saw. Rectangular, jig-sawn ventilator panels also decorated the brick frieze area framed by the long brackets and the (now gone) lower molding strip.

The tall, narrow window and door openings have no lintels and brick sills. All sash are modern 1/1 replacements. Doorways had single-light transom but both doors are modern replacements. The houses have no basements, Each house being reached directly from the street.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

date

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

telephone

city, town Baltimore

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of property rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

B-4809
410-420 S. Duncan Street
Block 1775 Lots 050-058
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





418-420 S Duncan

FD 11

B-4809

418-420 S. Duncan St.

BALETS, MD

C. Belfiore

11/97

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